

MAY 1ST
2007

THE MARCH CONTINUES

**DE-BUG
ONLINE ZINE**

Documenting
San Jose's
Immigrant
Rights
Movement





On May 1st, 2007 thousands of immigrants and their supporters came out to Eastside and downtown San Jose to show their strength, resilience and commitment to change. Despite relatively low coverage by the media, the march and rally had historic implications. And it happened at a time when young people in particular were not just in the movement, but were documenting the movement as well. This zine is a collection of writings and photos from folks who marched and chanted on May 1st. This march, and its predecessor from the previous year, changed social movement as we know it. Now, who tells its story, and how, has changed too. Welcome to this commemorative online zine, we hope you enjoy it.
- Raj Jayadev

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THOUSANDS MARCH, BUT CONAN O'BRIAN AND SPIDERMAN WEEK GET THE SPOTLIGHT

By G. Melesaine // Photo by Elizabeth Gonzalez

My voice feels like it's deciding to take a break, and my body is sore from yesterday. I turn on the morning news to see if there is any sign of the great event that took place. No signs from the media, but Conan O'Brien is in town and the New York mayor has proclaimed that this week will be an official Spiderman Week. Then a quick minute before the news hour is over, they show a young camera man being beat with a baton by a police officer and a man who was playing his drums quickly running to safety before she is mobbed by a storm of police officers in riot gear. I almost thought for a minute that this was probably another country, but it wasn't, it was Los Angeles.

On May 1st, thousands of people marched for justice, for equality, for their right to no longer be called an illegal human being in America. Across the country thousands of people participated in the marches. In San Jose, California, on the corner of Story and King, thousands of people gathered -- daughters grandmothers, sons, aunts, gay, straight, African-Americans, Mexicans, Asians, Cubans everyone who is suppose to define what an American was there. Like last year we all waited for the march to begin while listening to motivating speeches from random speakers. The crowd looked smaller than last year. The feeling was different, not bad but more or less a feeling that was "lets do what we came here to do."

This year's May 1st felt different, I know it didn't feel the same as last year. When the march ended at City Hall, I wondered if that was the end. If, after we all got home, went to sleep, awoke the next day would the march have any affect for things to change? It felt the same. The news reports made it clear to me what their priorities were, and I felt like the march went unno-

ticed. At the end of the news hour, a small video clip of a young man who was showing his rubber bullet wound reminded me of something. He was shot by police during the Los Angeles march, which ended in a tremendous amount of police force. He said, "This is psychological war to make us feel like we don't exist." No matter how little air time they give to the marches, rallies, and immigration rights, the people still exist.

“ On May 1st , thousands of people marched for justice, for equality, for their right to no longer be called an illegal human being in America. ”

The numbers prove that. The tactic of the media keeping it as the lowest priority is part of that psychological war, they want to make it seem like the march isn't important, so the people would think that marching doesn't matter. But by not showing the march means that it is the highest priority in America. This country and its government hates to look at itself in the mirror, because the reality is ugly and unjust. People die trying to just get a glimpse of the American Dream. Conan O'Brien and Spiderman is a quick façade to make America seem lovely.



Photo Essay By Charisse Domingo



Abraham
Menor



Photo Essay By Elizabeth González



San Jose's Fight for Immigration Reform Marches On

By Adrian Avila // Photo by Elizabeth Gonzalez

Thousands of pro-immigrant supporters took to the streets all over the nation to let their voices be heard, and here in San Jose was no exception. The message they chanted, sang and displayed was one for just immigration reform. The focus that is being put on this year's marches by the media is on the smaller number of people that came out this year compared to last year's march. Even though the actual people that marched feel like the reported numbers are completely off. For example, in San Jose the estimate of the people that came out was roughly 12,000, but some people said they felt like three or four times as many people were out on this May 1 st.



his two brothers. All three of them are undocumented.

My mother and I also marched together, which in a way is kind of rare because in all of the marches that have gone on in the past, we have always gone on our own. This year was different in a way because my mom asked me if I would march with her. At first I thought she was joking around, not to say that we don't get along or anything like that, but when it come to demonstrations or marches we both would just rather go our own way. When I asked her why it was that she wanted me to march

with her, she replied, "Because we came to this country together and we should fight for our rights together." I hadn't thought of it like that before, but she was right. And sure enough at 3:30 we were both in out white shirts and our marching shoes all laced up and ready to go and we set off each step representing all of the struggles that we have overcome, all in the pursuit of a better life.

In the end I did feel like we had strengthened our bond and from the look and sound of the sea of people gathered around city hall at the end of the march, it felt like a lot of other families did as well. As a people we must never overlook the great power that we have in our families coming together and standing up for what we feel is right.

“we set off each step representing all of the struggles that we have overcome, all in the pursuit of a better life.”

A big part of the crowd was made up of families that marched together on the 4.94 miles to San Jose's City Hall, with the hope that the people in power could see the unity that immigrants and non-immigrants alike have. It was a wonderful sight to see mothers and fathers walking hand and hand with their children with flags held high, projecting their voices so that the on lookers could hear the powerful messages that they wanted to get across. "Together we fight for our human rights," was a chant that a family near by me was chanting. During the march I spoke with a father of two who lives in San Jose who told me how he and his wife had come over from Mexico 11 years ago and now have two sons that are U.S. citizens. "We fear that one day we will we deported and our boys will be with out parents," he said.

With all of the recent I.C.E. raids that have been going on in the Bay Area and all across the nation people's concern of deportation are high and families want to get the word out that they should have the same human rights as citizens of this country do to live in peace with their families. The march was an enormous opportunity for immigrant families to expresses this message. "We can't show any fear, that's why we came out to march today," said a 32-year-old construction worker from San Jose who came out to march with



This Immigrants Rights March: Still A lot of People, But Less Anger and More Celebration

STORY BY SHANA WHITE // PHOTO BY CHARISSE DOMINGO

I t felt like this May 1 st was celebration to me, rather than an act of protest. Although I know that it was much more than that, it was about thousands of people fighter for workers rights, anti-immigrant raids. But looking around at the march, it felt like it was a celebration of last year's march, a remembrance of sorts. My expectation of the march and rally was that it was going to be the same as the last one, nothing more. But it felt different. Last year I felt people's anger, and what they were marching about had a direct political aim, HR4437, but this year there wasn't a clear of a target. Also, I felt a lot more police presence this year.

As we walked to City Hall from King and Story, I overheard a few people talking about the last march and how that was a lot more people that came out then expected. Yeah, that's true, but I don't think that should have been the center of conversation. What should have been the topic is since now this movement has a significant amount of community support, what will be proposed to stop ICE

raids? One thing I was hoping for was that I wanted to see if other ethnic groups would represent.

During beginning of the rally, San Jose Council member Dave Cortese was introduced to speak. When he spoke his first words in Spanish I thought, wow, I didn't know he spoke Spanish, but he spoke to the crowd by chanting. While I appreciated his presence, it is hard to take him serious, especially when he said,

“Last year I felt people's anger, and what they were marching about had a direct political aim, HR4437, but this year there wasn't a clear of a target”

“People of San Jose you are safe.” I thought, well is he willing to get ICE out of the Bay Area? He ended his 10-second speech with, “si se puede.” The crowd still respected and cheered when he was done.

Leaving the march, I wondered about next year. What will the drive be behind the march, since it will be the three years since the HR4437 angered everyone? Will we have made progress in real immigration reform? Also, will we be able to start getting larger presences of other ethnic groups? I hope so, and that if politicians do speak to the crowd again, they will be able to back up their word about people here being safe.

Power and Humility, with a Touch of Hyphy | May 1 st Movement in San Jose

By Ali Rahnoma // Photos by Elizabeth Gonzalez & Abraham Menor



O

n the International Day of the Worker (May Day) I joined more than 12,000 people to march in San Jose to commemorate resistance against racist immigration reform. It seemed that people did not just come out to march as workers -- they came out as families, immigrants, youths, students and as people who just believe in San Jo.

I did my usual pre-march routine to get ready for the big event. Between texting my friends for a meet up spot and finding a ride to the march I realized that this was the first march that I had attended this year. This was a stark difference to the height of the anti-war movement when marches were part of my weekly routine. I laced up my kicks and threw on my white shirt not knowing what to expect since the march was officially announced only two weeks ago.

I piled with a bunch of friends into a Toyota -- tall people in the front seats, little in the back and short people laying across. Two blocks from King and Story road, lines of high school and middle school students and families pushing baby carts filled the sidewalks. Marchers wore white t's (shirts) as a sign of solidarity and collective power, perhaps even humility. Some youngsters stuck to their street code and sported raiders and niners' jerseys with some hints of what is left of the hyphy movement. There was no main group to march with; instead there were pockets of friends. The march started at King and Story with a humble swell of marchers.

The threat of a cowardly ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) raid didn't stop people from being vocal. To me, people were more vocal than ever -- not in the way of shouts at a protest, but more in the way of work place conversations when the boss isn't around. "This is my kid, it's her first time to something like this," a woman told me. Her little daughter was oblivious to my presence. The young girl was holding her fist in the air and making sure that her little lungs kept her "I SE PUEDE!" from drowning in the crowd.

We crossed the 680 underpass when someone turned to the left and said, "look over there." We were marching past the back end of a preschool where the little ones were pressing against a wired fence and waving. They were yelling in hopes of catching the rhythms of the marchers' chants. In and out their voices would fade. Each time they harmonized with the

crowd, excitement would overcome them and their chanting would bloom into a flurry of yells and cheers. I snapped a few pictures, waved and moved with the crowd.

“and Story with a humble swell of marchers. The threat of a cowardly ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) raid didn't stop people from being vocal. To me, people were more”

I weaved back and forth across the crowd passing familiar faces along the way. The corner of King and Santa Clara Street marked the transition where East Side blends slowly into downtown. Then the peaks of San Jose's dwarfed high rises poked through the crest of the 101 over pass. This was the last stretch, I could see that the number of marchers had swelled at least three fold.

A few homies on the opposite side of the

street walked parallel to the march but in their own hurried pace. A sparkle would glisten from time to time from their hands and waist as they shyly nodded in approval to the crowd.

One-person yelled "viva trabajadero!" He looked around to see workers all around him but they were all too scattered across the crowd to join in on the chant. It was obvious that this day was special to him for that reason, a sentiment that I shared with him but did not know how express. That day I reunited with an old friend, a friend, which the dramas of life had separated me from. It was the day that San Jo put its' arm around me and reminded me that we had grown, and more growing was left within us.

Who I Didn't See When I Was Marching

Story and photo by Seth Hemmelgarn

As I walked up King Road yelling "Si se puede!" during Tuesday's march, I was surrounded by hundreds of people carrying American flags and signs bearing slogans like "Justicia Y Dignidad Para Todos Immigrantes." It was a beautiful day, and cars passing us on the street honked to show their approval. People clustered on the sidewalks waved and yelled to show their support.

I felt great, but I also felt a little awkward. As I yelled the popular slogan, I wondered if I was really qualified. Like the shirt I was wearing, I'm white. I've had a pretty comfortable life, and much of the struggling I've done has been my own fault. Throughout the march, I saw only a handful of other non-Hispanic people, and it bugged me.

My participation in Tuesday's march was not a huge, radical action. But I felt like there should have been thousands more non-Hispanic people out there to show our support. Thousands of people are simply trying to improve life for themselves and their families every day in our community, but through low wages and fear of the government (among other factors) they're being cheated. And way too many of us are just standing by, acting like it's got nothing to do with us.

I say "non-Hispanic" because I can't just say "white." There are lots of other races and ethnicities in San Jose, and I'm not sure all of them were represented Tuesday. There are plenty of non-Hispanic immigrants, too.

When I checked with a few other people at the march, it appeared that nobody was expecting us. When I asked a couple people if they thought more white people should be there, they didn't seem to get what I was saying. I don't think it was just a language barrier. After I asked the question, I realized how ridiculously patronizing it probably sounded, as if I'd asked, "You need us here, don't you? How can you do anything without us?" A couple of the white people I asked about it laughed. Had I really thought more of us would be there?

I should've known better what to expect. I'd gone to a similar march in San Francisco in September, and that experience had been about the same. I admit I'm a bit late to this movement. I didn't go to last year's march — I



was working. I imagine that's one reason a lot of people didn't make it Tuesday.

However, I think another reason is that too many of us just don't feel like we need to get involved. After I was complaining to a friend about this after the march, he said, "But they're here illegally."

Maybe a lot of immigrants are here illegally, but what have they done wrong? As far as I can tell, all most immigrants want is a chance to improve their lives. And they're willing to work very hard for that chance. I imagine that's exactly what my ancestors were doing here after they came from Germany and Ireland. As far as I know, nobody tried to kick them out of the country. (And I've heard many of my ancestors weren't the type of people you'd want in your neighborhood. But that's another story).

Often, when people express sympathy for undocumented immigrants, they point out that if it weren't for them, the rest of us would have trouble finding people to grow our food, cook our meals and scrub our floors. Then where would we be? That almost implies the only reason to let people stay is because they serve us. I know, a lot of people argue that illegal immigration is a huge drain on our resources. And if we let everybody who's here illegally now stay, won't more people come pouring in? I won't pretend to have any answers to these issues. But we're great at wasting resources in this country. How many hundreds of billions have we thrown into the Iraq war? I think if we spent our resources wisely, there'd be a lot more to go around for everyone.

I've worked hard for a lot of things, but I doubt that I would've been able to experience a lot of the joys I've had in my life if I hadn't been born here. I don't think we have the right to deny other people the opportunities that came to so many of us through sheer luck. Hopefully, more of us will get off our butts.

The kNOw

For the past several months, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials have swept through small Central Valley towns such as Mendota and Madera, arresting over 225 immigrants whom they suspected of being undocumented. The raids left communities in a state of shock and fear for the future. Wives were left without husbands, and some children were left with no parents. Many immigrants now feel they are unsafe in public, or even in their own homes.

Below, teen writers from the Fresno youth publication "The Know" share their thoughts about the recent raids and separation of families.

I think it's wrong that the ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) officers send so many people who don't have papers back to the countries where they were born, after so many years in the U.S. and so much hard work trying to learn English and fit in. Every human being should be treated equally no matter the color, or where they come from. Honestly, if no Mexicans were here today, the white people wouldn't have any fruits or vegetables. Mexicans were the ones who worked in the fields and because of them, we have food. I don't think white people would stand in the sun and cut or plant food to grow. I don't want to sound racist, and for sure I am not, but everyone should have the right to be a U.S. citizen.

-- Anna, 16

I am an immigrant too and I don't think it will be fair if one day at four in the morning, they pick me up. I am in this country to improve myself. I did not come to become a criminal, I came for a better future. Life in my country, Honduras, is hard. The poverty is increasing each day and opportunities and jobs are decreasing. Even if you go to college in Honduras, they don't hire you because of your education. Everything is based on what political party you belong to. For reasons like this, I came to this country. I want a better life and a good

future for my descendents.

Right now I am still in high school. After that, I am going to college and I am going to work. I don't think that I am committing a crime—I'm helping myself and this country. I feel sad for those families and kids who are immigrants and getting kicked out. I don't think the government cares about these children. Taking them away from their parents is just destroying their lives.

-- Carolina, 19

I believe the immigration raids are wrong. The children have to leave behind their friends and people they really care for. The adults have to leave everything they worked for in the U.S. and go back to where they began probably from nothing. They have to choose between taking their children back to nothing, or letting them stay alone in the U.S. for a better education.

--Kiya, 17

I think for kids to face deportation is strictly wrong. Kids are losing friends and loved ones through this terrible situation. Some kids are even losing their parents. I wouldn't want to lose my friends because of a stupid border line. People are supposed to be treated equally no matter where you come from. But now, they are just trying to kick you out.

--Keya, 17

When the U.S. takes away kids' parents, they are abandoning those kids. The U.S. is so messed up. It doesn't care who it hurts as long as they get what they want. Their actions don't even make sense. It seems like it's the government's way or the highway! Which really sucks.

--Laqusha, 19

If I had to choose between going back to the old country or living in a foster home with some people that I've never met before, and they are supposed to take care of me and make sure I make something of myself, I would stay yet want to go.

--Marcus, 17